



Rob Saka Urbanist Questionnaire 2023

Seattle City Council, District 1

What is your preferred Comprehensive Plan housing growth alternative and why?

I strongly believe in the importance of thoughtful and sustainable urban growth. When it comes to housing growth alternatives, my preferred approach is one that prioritizes density and affordability. Specifically, I support an approach that focuses on increasing the most density along transit corridors and in urban villages. This means investing in transit infrastructure and prioritizing development of affordable housing units within these dense areas.

What investments do we need to make to achieve our housing affordability goals, and what should those goals be? Do you support the Housing Levy?

I believe that addressing our city's housing affordability crisis requires a multi-faceted approach that involves both short-term and long-term solutions. In the short-term, we need to invest in programs that provide immediate relief for those who are struggling to find affordable housing. In the long-term, we need to take a more comprehensive approach that involves increasing the supply of affordable housing in our city. In terms of our housing affordability goals, I believe that we need to be ambitious and aim to make housing affordable for all residents of our city, regardless of income. Regarding the Housing Levy, I strongly support it as a critical tool in our efforts to address our housing affordability crisis.

Under what circumstances would you support pedestrianizing streets that are currently open to cars?

I believe in creating livable, walkable communities that prioritize the safety and well-being of pedestrians. Pedestrianizing streets can have numerous benefits, including improving public health, reducing traffic congestion, and creating more vibrant public spaces.

However, I also recognize that pedestrianizing streets is not always feasible or desirable. It is important to consider the needs of all users of the street, including



businesses, residents, and emergency vehicles. Before making any decisions about pedestrianizing streets, we must conduct a thorough analysis of the potential impacts on these stakeholders.

What is your approach to generating progressive revenue for the city?

My approach to generating progressive revenue for the city is centered around promoting economic growth, ensuring a fair and just tax system, and exploring innovative solutions to fund our most pressing needs. I am committed to working with my fellow council members and community stakeholders to build a more equitable and prosperous Seattle for all residents.

What is your position on impact fees?

I believe that impact fees are an important tool in managing the growth and development of our city, and I am committed to working with stakeholders to find a balanced and equitable approach to their implementation.

What items do you view as essential to the next Seattle transportation levy due in 2024?

The next Seattle transportation levy must prioritize investments that improve mobility, safety, and accessibility for all residents of our city, particularly those in underserved communities. I am committed to working towards a more equitable transportation system that serves the needs of all residents.

Would you vote to approve completing the streetcar network via the Center City extension and work with the mayor to prioritize funding and building it?

Yes

Under what circumstances are homeless encampment removals appropriate?

I understand the complexities of the issue of homelessness in our city. While we must always prioritize the well-being of our homeless residents, we must also balance that with the needs and safety of our broader community. We must



prioritize finding long-term solutions to homelessness that provide stable, affordable housing and access to social services.

Hiring incentives haven't worked so far to attract additional police officers to the Seattle Police Department. How can the City promote public safety in such an environment?

I believe that public safety is a top priority for our city, and we need to ensure that our police department is adequately staffed to provide efficient and effective law enforcement services to our residents and businesses. We need better response times.

While hiring incentives have not yet proven successful in attracting more police officers to the Seattle Police Department, I believe that we need to continue exploring and implementing innovative approaches to recruitment and retention. We can offer competitive salary and benefits packages, invest in training and professional development opportunities, and prioritize community policing efforts that foster stronger relationships between law enforcement and the communities they serve.

In addition to our efforts to bolster the police department, I also believe that we need to focus on promoting other approaches to public safety that can complement law enforcement efforts. This may include investing in community-led initiatives that address the root causes of crime, such as poverty, unemployment, and lack of access to mental health services.

What is the appropriate role for the Seattle Police Department to play in creating public safety in Seattle? What would a police contract that encourages safety look like? What does the next police contract need to have in order to earn your vote of approval?

As a former foster kid, I am painfully aware of the foster care-to-prison pipeline we have in this country. In addition, as a Black man, I have experienced police brutality firsthand. Empowered by these lived experiences, I have made it my mission to help reform our justice system locally. I believe that the appropriate role for the Seattle Police Department is to work collaboratively with community members to create a safe and welcoming environment for all residents and visitors. While we must



acknowledge and address historical inequities in policing and the need for reform, we must also recognize the vital role that law enforcement plays in maintaining public safety.

How can Seattle encourage more people to ride transit?

I believe that promoting and incentivizing transit ridership is a critical priority for our city. To encourage more people to ride transit, we need to invest in accessible, reliable, and affordable transportation options. We need to improve the quality and frequency of our transit services. We should work to make public transportation more affordable. We need to promote the benefits of transit ridership to our community. We should continue to invest in innovative transit solutions, such as electric buses and autonomous vehicles, to make transit even more efficient and environmentally sustainable.